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Chairman Michael Powell  
Commissioners Abernathy, Adelstein, Copps and Martin  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St., SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners:

I am writing to you on behalf of the more than 4,500 members of the Illinois Coalition for Competitive Telecommunications (ICCT) to express our strong opposition to any policy that would impose access charges or fees to enhanced pre-paid calling cards.

Our coalition is comprised of thousands of residential consumers and small businesses, as well as smaller, local telecommunications companies that strive to create and sustain a more competitive telecommunications industry to ensure Illinois consumers have access to affordable telecommunications services.

Roughly half of all lower-income households, earning less than \$20,000 annually, have used enhanced pre-paid calling cards. Further, enhanced pre-paid calling cards have provided an affordable means for students and military personnel to stay in touch with their families and loved ones. Obviously, any increase in the costs of these cards would result in an unfair financial burden on those who can least afford to foot the bill.

Because enhanced pre-paid calling card consumers interact with stored advertising messages that exist on information platforms, and are unrelated to the local phone network, that service is classified as an “enhanced service” - currently exempt from access charges under the FCC’s enhanced service provider (ESP) exemption.

The Bell monopolies are aggressively seeking new gimmicks to collect additional fees, at the expense of American consumers. They want to impose exorbitant “in-state” charges on these calling cards – up to 20 times more than the current interstate access charges consumers currently pay. These hefty in-state fees have forced families to pay more to call someone 75 miles away than they do to call someone across the country.

It’s time to derail the phone monopoly gravy train in Washington, D.C. and time to start looking out for the public interest, especially those living on lower and fixed incomes; the student population; and, last but not least, our military personnel and their loved ones who depend on enhanced pre-paid calling cards for their telecommunications needs.

Sincerely,

**Melia Carter, Executive Director**  
**Illinois Coalition for Competitive Telecommunications**